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SECURITY INFORMATION

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

22 September 1952

STAFF MEMORANDUM NO. 271

SUBJECT: Prospects for a Settlement of the Saar Issue  
(For Information of the Board)

1. Current developments. Both Chancellor Adenauer and Foreign Minister Schuman emerged from their [ ] meeting on the Saar issue, confident that the controversy could be settled within a European framework. However, they apparently discussed a settlement only in broad terms, without reaching final "solutions" of outstanding issues.

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2. Nevertheless, both Ministers appeared determined to prevent the Saar issue from embittering relations between their two countries and agreed to declare a moratorium on further agitation pending achievement of a settlement. The French are to encourage Saar authorities to postpone new elections -- scheduled to be held not later than October -- until February 1953. In addition, the French will discourage Saar officials from taking any actions which might be offensive to the Germans. For their part, the Germans are to cease their agitation for the legalization of pro-German parties in the Saar, and are presumably to propagandize for internationalization as a final solution to the Saar problem.

3. Meanwhile, the French and Germans plan to continue their negotiations in an effort to reach a more complete agreement. The French at least hope a settlement can be achieved before the EDC Treaty comes up for French Assembly ratification, which now appears unlikely before January or February 1953.

4. Outlook for a settlement of the Saar problem. There is some justification for optimism regarding a Saar settlement. Genuine enthusiasm appears to have been generated, at least on governmental levels, over the project for a European political

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authority, under which the Saar would be placed. There is a good chance that a scheme for Europeanization of the Saar will meet with acceptance, if not with enthusiasm, in Germany. According to a recent public opinion poll, roughly three-quarters of the West Germans would prefer to have the Saar returned to Germany, but only one-quarter of that number would "insist" on this solution. In the Saar itself, there is probably strong sentiment in favor of a return to Germany but the fact that the two pro-French coalition parties recently offered to stage a plebiscite on "Europeanization" is evidence that these parties believe that the Saarlanders would accept this solution.

5. The most difficult problem involved in a settlement of the Saar issue is that of devising some form of economic internationalization to supersede present French economic control. The Germans insist that there should be not only a "political" internationalization of the Saar, but genuine international controls over the Saar economy as well. There have been some indications that a basis for a settlement can be reached. Such a settlement would entail a relinquishment to a European authority of most of the controls now held by France over the Saar economy (including railways and coal mines). Control over Saar coal and steel would, of course, be vested in the Schuman Plan authority.

6. Probable effect of Saar issue on EDC ratification. According to German officials, the Saar issue is not likely to interfere seriously with Bundestag ratification of the EDC. There is considerably less assurance of this in the case of the French Assembly, but we believe that the French desire the early formation of an international political and economic authority on the continent, and that they would be willing to relinquish to such a body most of their controls over the Saar economy.

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